

thechronicle

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Reward put up to bring hitman to justice

£20,000 ON OFFER TO NAB KILLER



CCTV footage of the gunman entering Richard Deakin's back garden

THE HUNT for Richard Deakin's killer heightened this week when CCTV footage of the man police want to catch was aired on national television.

A £20,000 reward has been offered for information leading to a conviction, with the officer in charge of the investigation suggesting the murder could have been a professional hit.

Businessman Deakin was 27 years old when he was gunned down in his home in Meadow Street, Chasetown, on July 5.

Since then two men have been arrested in connection with Mr Deakin's death and remain on police bail pending further inquiries.

Detective Chief Inspector Dave Garrett, who is leading the manhunt, appeared on BBC One's Crimewatch programme on Tuesday night (December 14) to appeal to viewers to help snare Mr Deakin's killer.

Hallmarks

A CCTV recording was shown of the masked man pulling up outside Mr Deakin's house in a black Vauxhall Corsa, before entering the property with a sawn-off shotgun at 8.09am.

He then leaves less than a minute later having twice shot Mr Deakin while he lay in his own bed.

"I think it's got all the hallmarks of a contract killing," Detective Inspector Barrett said on the programme.

"But we still need some help to find out why Richard was targeted and

by TIM SPIERS

cannockchron@expressandstar.co.uk

also who actually committed that offence.

"We believe the offenders are from the Wolverhampton area."

Mr Garrett added that the Vauxhall Corsa was driven around the scene of the crime prior to the offence and was later dumped half a mile away in Coppy Nook Lane, Burntwood.

Mr Deakin, who ran a skip hire firm in Walsall, moved to Meadow Street in Chasetown in 2008 with his fiancée Megan and their two daughters Ellie, aged four and Jessica, two.

They were out of the house at the time of Mr Deakin's murder.

"It's a very shocking case and it's had a terrible effect on the family," Mr Garrett said.

"Both Richard's partner and the children haven't returned to the house since the shooting."

"It's the first time the family have got Christmas without Richard so they're desperate for answers."

Mr Garrett yesterday said that there was every chance someone who knows the killers saw Tuesday night's Crimewatch programme and he urged them to pick up the phone.

"As displayed in the CCTV footage, Richard's murder was calculated and cold-blooded," he added.

"We need to take these people off the streets and bring closure for Richard's family."

Anyone with information is urged to ring the incident room on 01785 233600 or Crimestoppers, anonymously, on 0800 555 111.

The CCTV footage can be seen at www.youtube.com/staffordshirepolice



Players celebrate with Charlie Blakemore and chief executive Mike Joiner

Scholars on Trophy hunt

CHASETOWN president Brian Baker hailed the club's latest success as "great for the community" as preparations began to welcome prestigious opposition to the Scholars Ground next month.

Grant Ryan's astonishing winner in the last minute of extra time against Kettering, just 120 seconds after he was introduced as a substitute, set up a plum tie against Grimsby Town in the second round of the FA Trophy.

It also sparked delicious scenes of celebration among the travelling Chasetown fans, as well as in the dressing room after the game where the players, manager Charlie Blakemore and his backroom staff toasted a truly memorable evening.

Kettering, like Grimsby, are ranked two divisions higher in the non-league pyramid but Chasetown overcame the odds at Rockingham Road with a 2-1 victory.

This came after an equally as thrilling first encounter at the Scholars Ground on Saturday, when Kettering forced a replay with a last-minute equaliser in a 3-3 draw.

Mr Baker proclaimed the games as two of the best in the club's history.

"It's another part of the Charlie

Blakemore saga - he couldn't have written a better sequel" the club's president said.

"When you think of the late goals, the end-to-end play, missed penalties, great chances, shots off the crossbar and brilliant saves - the games had everything."

The Scholars welcome Grimsby, a football league club for 99 consecutive years until relegation from the Football League in May, to their Church Street ground on January 15.

Prize money of £6,000 awaits the winner, not to mention a place in the third round - just three games from the final - and Mr Baker pleaded with fans to turn up and fill the ground.

"Who'd have thought 50 years on that Grimsby, who were in the top flight not long before we formed in 1954, would be playing us now," he added.

"We just hope the people come out and support us. It's great for the lads and great for our community."

Chief executive Mike Joiner said the tie was the biggest the club could have drawn. "It's a tie you dream about as a kid and suddenly it's happening," he said.

"The Kettering win ranks as one of our highest achievements because they're streets ahead of us in football ability and everything else."

"Our success is built around having this team spirit where they'll go that extra yard for your mate."

"That includes off the pitch as well where our groundsman Bob Brookes and his four assistants worked wonders to get the original tie on last Saturday."

● Match report:
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Goalscoring hero, supersub Grant Ryan

Charity puts on Christmas show

A CHRISTMAS Concert in aid of Newlife Foundation for Disabled Children will be held in Cannock tomorrow night (Friday).

It is being held at the Prince of Wales Centre, in Church Street, at 7.30pm.

The Newlife Foundation, which operates a shop in Hemlock Way, Cannock, cares for disabled and terminally ill children.

Tickets for the show cost £6 for adults, £5 for concessions, and £20 for a family ticket. Call the Prince of Wales box office on 01543 578 762.



Victim Richard Deakin

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Councils hit as £188m in grants axed

COUNCILS and police in Staffordshire and the Black Country are to be stripped of more than £188 million in government grants over the next two years.

More than £90m will be cut next year followed by a £53m reduction in 2012.

Staffordshire County Council will lose £10.6m – two per cent – in 2011 and £11.2m the year after.

The district councils of Cannock Chase, South Staffordshire, Lichfield and Stafford will lose £3.6m between them next year and £2.6m in 2012.

Councillor Neil Stanley, Lib Dem leader of Cannock Chase Council, said it had fared a little better than predicted.

Police

Burntwood's Councillor Paul Atkins, who sits on the county council and Lichfield District Council, said the cuts would not necessarily mean a reduction in front line services.

West Midlands Fire Authority will lose £6.7m, 5.6 per cent of its funding, in 2011 and £2.5m in 2012. West Midlands Police will see funding fall from £513.8m to £480.3m while Staffordshire Police will get £119.3m compared with £127.6m this year.

Wolverhampton is preparing for £70m in cuts by 2015. Staffordshire County Council is looking for £120m of savings.

Eight-mile Chase trek

MEMBERS of Chase and District Ramblers Group will be combining a Christmas lunch with an eight-mile walk on Cannock Chase this Sunday (December 19).

The walk will start from the Wildwood shopping centre car park in Stafford at 9am, taking in Brocton and finish back at the Wildwood pub.

To take part, call 07845 195237.

Keep blood stocks high

DONORS are being urged to give the best Christmas gift of all next week – blood.

Sessions are planned across the area to help keep stocks healthy over the festive period. Volunteers can attend Heath Hayes Constitutional Club, in Hednesford Road, on Tuesday (December 21).

Sessions times are 1.30 to 3.30pm and from 4.30 to 7pm.

Call 0300 123 23 23 to make an appointment.

Asda pitch infusion

COUNCILLORS have agreed to use £305,000 available from Asda to help fund an artificial sports pitch for a Cannock school.

Cannock Chase District Council had planned to use money from a Section 106 planning agreement Cardinal Griffin Catholic High School, but talks were still taking place with Asda and issues remain to be resolved.

Council leader Councillor Neil Stanley said it was suggested that

other Section 106 funds be used for the school pitch and the Asda money be assigned to other projects once agreement was reached.

The artificial pitch at the school in Stafford Road will cost more than £500,000.

Asda had pledged £562,000 for provision of an artificial pitch as part of the planning consent for its Avon Road store in 2005. The Staffordshire FA is backing the scheme.

Trust's stamps plea

STAFFORDSHIRE Wildlife Trust is asking people to donate used stamps from their Christmas cards to generate funds for its work.

Catherine McDonald, the trust's visitor centre receptionist at Wolsley Bridge, near Rugeley, who is organising the collection, said: "This is a really easy way to help the wildlife and wild places on your doorstep."

"Simply cut out the stamps from any post you receive and send them to us or

drop them off at one of our visitor centres."

The appeal is ongoing and stamps can be dropped off at any time of year. People can either take them in to the Wolsley Centre in Wolsley Bridge, between Stafford and Rugeley, or post them to Stamp Appeal, Staffordshire Wildlife Trust, Wolsley Centre, Wolsley Bridge, Stafford, ST17 0WT.

The trust manages 26 nature reserves across the country.

Walking gallery unveils display

A COMMUNITY youth group has revealed its latest art display as it expands a walking gallery around Burntwood.

Morph4us unveiled the 2012 Olympic Games-inspired installation at Burntwood Leisure Centre on Monday.

The youngsters who created the project received help from the local community, who were consulted on sports quotes which have been included in the design.

Supported by the national lottery through Arts Council, the Morph4us team comprises young people from Burntwood with help from Staffordshire Young People's Service, Positive Futures, Lichfield District Council and Bourn Communication Ltd.

Councillor Ben Adams, communities and culture chief at Staffordshire County Council, said: "This latest phase of the Morph4us project has focussed more on involving adult members of the local community, to create a truly intergenerational project."

Townsfolk are urged to shop local in 2011

Boxers urged to learn the ropes

A BOXING club near Cannock is inviting more people to learn the ropes. The Right Stuff Boxing Club, at Huntington, wants local youngsters to come along and join the team.

The club has been going for just over six months and already has more than 30 regular members aged between 10 and 20.

One or two of them are set to enter into boxing contests shortly, as a result of training they have received at the club which is based at Littleton Green Youth Centre, Stafford Road, Huntington.

Behaviour

The club held a sponsored day of boxercise to raise funds for both the boxing club and the local youth club last Saturday, December 11.

The Right Stuff project, which is aimed at diverting young people away from anti-social behaviour and reducing the negative perceptions of young people and the fear of crime, was put forward for an award in the Children and Young People Awards 2010.

The scheme began in Stone, has already had significant successes in Stafford and Huntington.



PCSO Louise Jones leads the way in the Boxercise event at Littleton Green Youth Centre to raise funds for The Right Stuff Boxing Club

TRADERS in Hednesford have launched a campaign to urge people to shop locally and support the town's small businesses in 2011.

The campaign called Find It In Hednesford began this week.

It calls on townfolk to make more use of the wide range of independent businesses on their own doorstep.

It is the brainchild of business owners from Hednesford Traders Association and was prompted by a rise in the number of new shops opening their doors in the town centre.

Linda Whitehouse, managing director of Bromleys Independent Property Services, in Market Street, Hednesford, and the vice-chair of the association, said: "Like any other town, Hednesford was hit by the recession and saw its fair share of shop closures and empty units as a result."

"Also, historically, it's sometimes been overlooked in favour of bigger neighbouring towns like Cannock and Lichfield."

"However, things really seem to be on the up now. New shops are opening every week, we've run a number of successful events recently, and more and more people appear to be coming to the town centre to do their shopping."

"Hednesford is likely to become even more attractive to shoppers next year when a number of developments, including the redevelopment of the lower end of Market Street, come to fruition."

Keyboard star guests

ANDREW Nix will be the guest performer at Burntwood Music For All group tonight (Thursday).

Hailing from Selby in North Yorkshire, Nix has become well-known in both the UK and Europe for his talents at the keyboard as well as being a truly gifted comic.

He is playing at the Memorial Institute in Rugeley Road from 7.30pm. Tickets are £4.50 on the door and include a mince pie and drink. More details from CMP on 01530 274270.

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Police object to Burger King hours

AT LEAST three serious police incidents every month are being reported near a fast food restaurant in Rugeley.

The dossier of alerts has been included as part of Staffordshire Police objections to Burger King's bid to extend opening hours at Western Springs Road.

Bosses want to cash in on late night passing trade by opening

until midnight at weekends. The restaurant currently closes at 11pm while a neighbouring petrol station opens 24 hours a day.

Police are opposing the move over fears it will increase crime in the area, and have released details of incidents outside the restaurant over the last year.

They include complaints of

gangs of up to 20 drunken revellers damaging cars at the neighbouring Travelodge hotel and a crowd of 60 youths drinking outside.

Other reports include suspected drug deals, assaults and fireworks being set off close to the restaurant.

Further along Western Springs Road there have been

reports of youths urinating from a bridge.

In a statement to Cannock Chase Council licensing officers, the Burger King franchise's commercial manager Michael James said: "We have trained and experienced staff and operate under strict franchise agreements with the Burger King corporation."

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The meeting was originally scheduled to take place last week, but was cancelled due to bad weather.

Hagley Park Sports College Becky Farr, Nathan Ball and Charlotte Craddock have Christmas all wrapped up with the school's shoebox appeal

Boney Hay Councillor Russell Heath said: "I think it's disgusting."

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Action call as town is 'lethal'

ADISABLED Cannock pensioner is demanding that the council does more to make the town's retail area safer as he has seen several people fall over outside shops.

Tom Wood, aged 74, says the town centre is "lethal" and that several people, especially the elderly, have been hurt.

Mr Wood, of Stafford Road, said: "People are slipping all over the place as they walk around Cannock town centre people are falling over."

Last week Mr Wood, who recently suffered a stroke, said he tried his best to help an elderly lady who had fallen over outside Ladbrokes.

"We tried to pick her up, but we were struggling and a policeman came over to help - it's lucky he was there."

County Councillor Mike Maryon said: "I sympathise with anyone who has struggled to get around in the last week or so due to the weather and would urge everyone to be extra careful."

Children win card contest

THREE Rugeley pupils have been named as the winners of the Town Council's annual Christmas Card competition.

The winning design is chosen as the chairman's official Christmas card dispatched to dignitaries across the country to showcase the talent of the local schoolchildren who enter the contest.

This year's winners were chosen from Redbrook Hayes Community Primary School, in Talbot Road, Brereton. They were: Lois Jones, aged nine; Grace Cook, seven, and Chenise Bryan, nine.

They were presented with their awards last Friday (December 10).

Vacant seat on authority

VILLAGERS in Heath Hayes and Wimblebury can apply for a vacant seat on the parish council's Old Heath Hayes ward.

Information can be obtained from the clerk. E-mail: raym@the-msa.com or apply to: 2, Norton East Road, Norton Canes, WS11 9RT.

Leader wants green belt return at landfill site

THE leader of Cannock Chase Council is suggesting that three-quarters of the Poplars landfill site should be returned to green open space, as a condition of a new incinerator being allowed to be built there.

Biffa Waste is hoping to develop an energy recovery facility on the Kingswood Lakeside site. Residential waste would be burned to produce electricity and supply heat to businesses and homes.

At Full Council meeting last Wednesday (December 8), Councillor Neil Stanley

warned it was likely that Staffordshire County Council would approve the proposal. He said there would be three-quarters less material going to landfill at the Poplars as a result and said that would be an opportunity to get three-quarters of the site returned to green space.

"It is an opportunity for the council to put pressure on the county council to make it a planning condition that only a quarter of the site remain operational to accommodate that reduced amount of residential waste," he

said. Councillor John Kraujalis said he was pleased the district council had opposed the incinerator near Cannock and said it was time to press Biffa to set a time limit for when landfill would stop at the Poplars.

He said there was a danger of the operation continuing for up to 70 years.

"The site is part of the green belt and should be returned to green belt in the future. Biffa have never given a date to us or the county council by which it will finish using the land and grass it over," he said. "I feel strongly that

they should announce a set date for returning it to green belt."

Councillor John Beddows said Norton Canes parish council was strongly against the incinerator and wanted all the councils to work together. "We are supposed to be in an area of outstanding natural beauty, but have become the dumping ground for the whole county and further afield," he said.

Councillor Beddows said he feared contamination problems in the area if the incinerator was allowed.

Council plea on care for elderly

CANNOCK Chase Council is asking people to look out for the welfare of their elderly and vulnerable neighbours during the winter months.

With sub-zero temperatures again being forecast, many vulnerable people in the Cannock Chase District will have difficulty getting out.

Many employees from local authorities who deliver services in the community will also face difficulties.

Councillor Wendy Yates, the council's healthier communities leader, said: "During the awful weather conditions we're currently experiencing I would ask people to keep an eye out for their neighbours, particularly the frail and housebound."

"If you have an elderly neighbour you know has difficulty getting out, it only takes a few minutes to pop in and see if they need anything."

"A small gesture like offering to pick up some shopping can make a huge difference."

Inquest ruling on painter

A PAINTER and decorator died after a prolonged exposure to asbestos, an inquest in Cannock heard.

Ronald Webster, aged 70, of Cornhill Road, Hednesford, died at St Giles Hospice, Whittington, on October 17 from mesothelioma, a form of cancer. He had been diagnosed in November 2009 at North Staffordshire Hospital.

South Staffs Coroner Andrew Haigh ruled that Mr Webster died from an industrial disease. He said he spent a large portion of his life as a painter and decorator and had come into contact with asbestos.

Homes plan at pub site

A CHASETOWN pub may be redeveloped for housing after being sold.

The Swan, in High Street was put on the market for £250,000 by Admiral Taverns and was bought by Baxter and Shipley LLP who plan to develop the site for residential accommodation.

'Seamless' link between town and park planned

A LANDMARK £50 million regeneration scheme designed to transform Hednesford will include plans to provide a "seamless link" between the town centre and its flagship park.

Regeneration firm St Modwen has lodged plans to overhaul access to Hednesford Park, on Rugeley Road, in a bid to strengthen the connection between the popular green site and nearby businesses.

The improvements, part of the Chase Gateway scheme, will also make it easier for public events to be staged at the park, is the second biggest in the district.

Plans include improved access at the Rugeley Road side of Victoria Street, new rubbish bins, improved landscaping, new maintenance area and new security fencing around play facilities.

Mark Watkins, St Modwen senior development surveyor, said: "The planning application submitted to Cannock Chase District Council covers works to seamlessly link Hednesford Park to Hednesford town centre."

Merger plan for schools is launched

A MAJOR strategy to merge two Rugeley high schools and a college into a single-site academy has been unveiled in a bid to revive plans axed by the coalition government.

Long-running proposals to combine Fair Oak High School, Hagley Park High School and Aelfrag College to form a £30m super-school were scuppered by the collapse of the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme in July.

Now Mark Sutton, appointed executive head teacher of the three sites to oversee the original merger, has unveiled plans to relaunch the schools as a sponsored academy.

Subject to government approval, it is proposed the complex will be sponsored by not-for-profit organisation the Creative Education Trust.

The academy would be built on Hagley fields, the central location approved for the original super-school, bringing to an end to 55 years of Hagley Park School and 42 years of Fair Oak.

Mr Sutton said: "This is a fantastic opportunity for improving education in Rugeley."

"By taking this step now, the board of governors believes that we will have the best chance of securing the capital investment in our schools that we need."

Parents are to receive more details over the forthcoming weeks.

"It is important that the scheme is developed in such a way that there continues to be easy access into the park - particularly for the vehicles used to stage future events at the park."

"Working closely with the council's parks officers, we are proposing to allow for adequate access into the park from the Rugeley Road end of Victoria Street."

Hednesford town councillor Alan Pearson said: "The current fencing is in need of repair, it's damaged and looks a mess."

Discount

"We need to get the place tidied up a bit and get as many people as possible in there."

The Chase Gateway scheme includes an 85,000 sq ft Tesco Extra store creating up to 600 jobs.

The project - a venture between St Modwen and Cannock Chase Council - includes a discount supermarket, smaller retail units, community centre, cadet hut and bingo hall.

Planning permission for the main part is secured, with the final phase approved in autumn.

Rent-free Christmas for tenants

CANNOCK Chase Council tenants have a rent-free festive period if they are up to date with their payments.

The authority has switched from two single rent-free weeks at Christmas and Easter to a rent-free fortnight at Christmas and New Year. Tenants pay their 52 weeks' rent over a 50-week period, with the rent-free weeks beginning December 27, and January 3.

For those in arrears, the rent-free fortnight is the time to clear or reduce their arrears.

Thefts put club future in balance



First team captain John Lloyd by the empty garage after a robbery at Cannock and Rugeley cricket ground

A CRICKET club's future is in the balance after thieves took more than £10,000 in equipment.

Cannock & Rugeley captain John Lloyd says a spate of increasingly expensive thefts has made things a lot more difficult for the club.

He said: "During every close season we have the perennial problem of petty theft."

"However the nature of the larceny has now stepped up a level and the value of the theft has increased dramatically," he added.

"This has left the cricket club in a very precarious position as to its ability to produce the type of facility to be able to play at the standard of cricket the club is proud to be achieving."

On Monday, December 6, Staffordshire Police were called to the Littleworth Road ground, in Rawsley, where thieves had made off with several lawnmowers, including a sit-on model which cost £4,500.

Mr Lloyd said the club has experienced break-ins in the past, but now they were crippling the finances.

He said: "The most recent theft has seen the assailants gain access to the ground across several farmers' fields and use specialised vehicles to remove the three-inch thick steel doors to our equipment which the club simply cannot afford to replace."

Mr Lloyd thinks the raid involved four or five men. Boards were left outside the clubhouse which Mr Lloyd thinks were used to load the machinery on to getaway vehicles.

Club officials are now wondering what they can do to deter criminals from striking again.

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Turbines are granted after college appeals

A SCHEME for two 413ft high wind turbines at South Staffordshire College's Rodbaston campus has been given the go ahead by a planning inspector.

The college appealed after South Staffordshire District Council turned down the planning application for the green belt site in April.

Penkridge resident Bevan Craddock, who objected to the scheme, said the turbines would be built on the Rodbaston estate very close to the M6, the canal,

within 1km of the ancient heronry at Gailey and just 1km away from the local micro-light airstrip at Pillaton.

Mr Craddock said the turbines would also be within 1km of the housing estates to the south end of Penkridge and could devalue local property. He said a new road would have to be built on agricultural land to access the site.

"Although the officers of the council recommended approval, the councillors of the planning authority listened to local people and turned the application down," he added. One councillor claimed that the tur-

bines would look like a pair of "Blackpool Towers."

They will be used to generate electricity for the college site, with any extra being sold back to the National Grid.

In November it was revealed that the college received the green light for a £2.8m redevelopment of the Rodbaston Campus.

Some of the buildings at the site, near Penkridge, which date back to the 19th century, will be demolished under the plans which were unanimously approved by South Staffordshire Council's regulatory committee. Six new classrooms will be

created under the plan, as well as a kitchen, meeting room, offices, careers and counselling areas and conference facilities.

Among the areas earmarked for demolition to make way for the two-storey learning hub are storage sheds, a water tower, temporary classrooms, a refectory and diesel tanks.

Training

The campus, which was formerly an agricultural college, will be the only one of its kind delivering land-based environmental and sustainable training for industry, according to a South Staffordshire Council report.

The report also stated that the campus has suffered several years of decline.

Grounds and parkland will also be restored to attract new visitors and some of the building work will be funded by a £1 million grant from the Skills Funding Agency as well as refurbishment of the hall.

No increase in staff or student numbers is expected.

Pair named Neighbours of the Year

A COUPLE who helped their elderly neighbour through her late husband's illness have been named as Cannock Chase Council's inaugural Neighbours of the Year.

The competition was organised by the council's housing department to promote community spirit.

The winners were Karin and Philip Hewitt of Station Road, Hednesford, who were nominated by their neighbour Melitta Farnell, aged 86.

Karin and Philip helped Mrs Farnell during her late husband's illness, making sure she was coping, as well as helping with shopping and other jobs. The prize of store vouchers and chocolates was presented by housing leader Councillor Phil Freeman and health leader Councillor Wendy Yates.

Councillor Freeman said: "Community spirit is very much alive and well in Cannock Chase and we had dozens of entries."

"Karin and Philip are worthy winners. They helped Mrs Farnell through a very difficult time and they continue to help and support her."

"Their story should be an example to everyone."



Back from left; Councillor Wendy Yates, Councillor Phil Freeman and Philip Hewitt with front Melitta Farnell and Karin Hewitt

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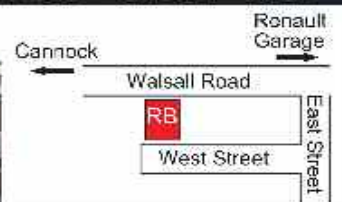
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Incensed over claims of shouting at pupils

I AM writing in relation to an article that was printed in the Cannock Chronicle last week (December 9).

In the article a newly franchised driving instructor for a company called Kankan was allowed to make a generalised comment regarding male driving instructors in Cannock. In the article she stated that male driving instructors in this area had shouted at their pupils.

I am myself a male driving instructor in Cannock and have been teaching here for over 13 years and have never shouted at my pupils male or female. This comment I find derogatory and slanderous, because the DSA frowns upon instructors shouting at or abusing pupils in any way.

Myself and a number of my colleagues are incensed about this comment and have also contacted the company that franchises this lady.

GWYN JOHN
ADVANCED DRIVING INSTRUCTOR
1 1/2 OF A DRIVER
CANNOCK

Instructors could lose work in flooded market

I READ the article about Sarah Brown at the weekend. As I am a driving instructor in Cannock I find it a bit of a worry that you would print this story about local professional people without even talking to them first.

In a market that is flooded, this could potentially cost me and my friends work. I myself have been an instructor for 21 years and have never shouted or abused anyone and I'm sure I can speak for my colleagues too.

Perhaps you would ask Sarah to back up her claims and contact the DSA who I'm sure would be very interested.

You might be able to shed some light on the fact that there are several unlicensed instructors in the area which is even more of a problem.

STEVE YARNOLD
KEY SCHOOL OF MOTORING
CHESLYN HAY

Options on spending cuts will hit the poor or disabled

I WAS appalled to read Neil Stanley's options of where the council could make cuts to reduce spending. This is the typical response we could expect from the Con/Dems.

The 29 options will hit the poorest or the disabled in our society. I have some better options that would be more acceptable.

1: Sack the Chief Executives as they are paid more than the Prime Minister. Their pay, extortionate pensions and expenses will save nearly £2 million per year.

2: Halve the wages paid to our 41 councillors and reduce expenses to £1,000 per year. This will save £1.5 million per year.

3: Charge Biffa 20 per cent of their annual profits for the recycling that everyone is doing for nothing. This will bring in another £13.5m.

Mr Stanley, these are much better options than yours.

HELEN BEARD,
SHAFTESBURY DRIVE,
HEDNESFORD.

A bad year just made worse

MAY I through your newspaper please make an appeal?

On Tuesday, December 7, I parked my black Fiat Seicento in the disabled bay markings outside Cannock Hospital on the main Brunswick Road, at 4.15pm on returning to my car just one hour later. I discovered my driver's side wing mirror smashed and a long scratch running along the body of the car. It was a busy road and lots of people were in that area.

As the driver who inflicted the damage did not stop, someone must have seen something. If so, please contact Cannock Police (or this newspaper).

To the driver of the car - I am living with multiple painful disabilities on a very low income and dependent on my car.

After a bad year I'm now about to end it with a bad Christmas too.

Thanks to you, I will be meeting the full cost of repairs myself so please do the decent, honest thing and make yourself known.

ELIZABETH COPE
BURNTWOOD

LETTERS to the Editor are welcomed on any local topic. Send your correspondence to: Cannock & Lichfield Chronicle, 51-53 Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES or e-mail canockchron@expressandstar.co.uk

Please note that full names and addresses MUST be supplied, though these can be withheld at the author's request. The Editor reserves the right to cut or not to publish.

Job well done as museum reopens

IT IS great news that the Museum of Cannock Chase was opened again so quickly after it was forced to close on Wednesday December 8 because of burst water pipes.

The burst happened at around 11.30am and museum employees responded to the problem immediately.

Electricians and plumbers, as well as museum staff and firefighters, worked through the afternoon and early evening to clear out the water.

It's a great credit to the

staff there and those who helped them through this difficult problem in very cold weather.

Their hard work meant that the museum's historical documents, photographs and records were quickly moved to a safe, dry area as soon as the flooding was discovered and there has been no damage to the permanent displays and collections.

Well done to all those who helped and managed this problem so well.

GRAHAM BURNETT
COUNCILLOR HEDNESFORD NORTH

Benefit vital for disabled

IN THE comprehensive spending review, the Chancellor announced that the government would be removing the mobility component of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for those people who live in residential care homes.

Disability charities and organisations, such as Mencap, are campaigning against this decision.

We are all very concerned that, as an unintended consequence of this proposal, many people with a learning disability will no longer be able to afford to go out and meet with friends and families, participate in external social activities and engage with their local communities.

I believe the government has misunderstood how disabled people use their local communities. Without this vital lifeline, many disabled people in residential care will lose much of their independence.

MISS JODIE BOOTH
HUNTINGTON TERRACE ROAD
CANNOCK

Nice lady has been good councillor

FURTHER to my letter 'Beyond the boundaries of fairness' in the Chronicle of December 2.

I have been personally contacted by Zaphne Stretton about my belief that she had in the past been a Conservative member.

While I believe this was not stated in my letter as fact, she says she was not a Conservative member, so I am happy to retract the comment.

However, I do detect signs of desperation by Zaphne Stretton, her agent and some members within the hierarchy of the local Labour Party.

And I now confirm that I have

refused to attend a meeting with three members of executive, instructing me to give explanations as to why I made statements to the Press about the de-selection of Doris Grice.

I have written to the local Labour Party and told them that the reason for stating my opinions and beliefs is because of what I deem to be the disgraceful manner in which Doris Grice was disposed of.

Doris Grice is a nice lady and has been a good councillor.

Zaphne Stretton says she is a friend of Doris Grice, but in my view no friend would do to Doris

what she and her disgraceful agent appear to have done. And, it is my opinion that the selection of Zaphne Stretton as a candidate, will not be the right one for people in the Hedgesford North ward.

If the local Labour Party have any decency left, they should move forward and apologise to Doris Grice for what has been done.

I have nothing to gain from the statements I have made, and I know in my own mind that I have stood up for what I believe to be fair, decent and honest.

PAUL WITTON
BRUNSWICK ROAD
CANNOCK

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Help on reducing fuel bills

RESIDENTS in Cannock Chase can cut their winter fuel bills by claiming grants and taking advice on how to save energy, the council says.

Cannock Chase has a designated hotline to help householders claw back some cash.

Qualified advisers are on hand to provide information about insulation grants and the Health through Warmth scheme.

Anyone in the district whose property has no cavity wall insulation or insufficient loft insulation can get up to 50 per cent off any work.

An average three-bedroom semi-detached household could save as much as £260 a year on fuel bills by installing cavity wall and loft insulation.

People aged 70, or those on means-tested benefits, may not have to pay a penny for insulation to reap the benefit.

Councillor Wendy Yates, the council's healthier communities leader, said: "Heating homes during the winter can put quite a dent in the finances - and if your property is not as well insulated as it could be, you could be wasting a lot of money."

"There are many grants and discounts available to help residents reduce their heating bills and stay warmer this winter."

"The Freephone helpline is designed to let our residents know about these - why not call and find out what help is available."

The hotline is on 0800 112 3820.

Carers miss out on cash - claim

MORE than 600 carers in Cannock Chase could be missing out on thousands of pounds of support they do not know they are entitled to.

National charity Carers UK say there are approximately 608 carers in the Cannock Chase area missing out on allowances.

The charity says more than 30,000 carers across the West Midlands are paying a heavy price

as they miss out on Carer's Allowance for looking after ill or disabled loved ones at home.

In Cannock Chase, there are 1,130 carers in receipt of Carer's Allowance, with 1,738 people eligible, meaning there is around £1,705,396 in unclaimed allowances.

Estimates from the charity suggest that 30,321 carers nationally are missing out on a total of £84.9 million worth of Carer's Allowance each year.

The charity fears that carers, who are often isolated, unsupported and unaware of the help they can get, end up cutting back on essentials like food and heating to make ends meet.

Imelda Redmond CBE, the chief executive of Carers UK, said: "Over 206,000 people become carers every year in the West Midlands and we hear from families who are simply not told about the support that is there for them."

"Many also don't see themselves as carers, but as mothers, sons, partners and friends looking after ill or disabled loved-ones."

"As a result, many miss out on support and end up caring round the clock with out a break, and struggling to pay even basic food and heating bills."

Crucial

"We rely heavily on the support provided by carers, which has been valued at a staggering £87 billion per year across the country," she added.

"It is crucial that all parts of our society work to identify carers and ensure they get the support they need."

Carers UK is also calling on members of the public to tell someone they know who is caring, to find out their entitlements.

Carers who want information about their entitlements can order a free guide by visiting www.carersuk.org, by ringing 0808 808 7777, writing to Carers UK at 20 Great Dover Street, London SE1 4LX, or by sending an email to advice@carersuk.org

Students in pre-show visit



Students Sam Cottrell (aged 17), Simon Rawlings (17), Rosa Grantham (16), Alex Dowell (16) and Bethanie Leavesley, 17 with resident Tilly Hulse (81)

CARING sixth formers popped in for a cup of tea at a residential care home.

A string quartet made up of students from Cardinal Griffin RC School, in Cannock, were yesterday (Wednesday) putting on a festive show for residents at Horse Fair Care Home, in Rugeley.

Last week they popped in for a meet-and-greet to familiarise themselves with their audience and provide them with some company.

Care home receptionist Natalie Shaw said: "It was a nice chance for them to meet up and get to know one another. It's nice for the residents to have visitors."

The £5.3m care home, owned by Avery Healthcare, opened in September. They bought the site when the town's health centre moved to purpose-built premises in Sandy Lane in 2007.

Construction of the 72-bed care home began after demolition of the original building in May last year.

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Chenoa Rainer (aged eight) from Hednesford

Hundreds see X Factor Faye perform festive single Lantern parades help to light up Christmas



Play ranger Ian Astbury with, from left, Emma Beeston and Tyla-Reece Astbury



Katelyn Brown, left, and Kerensa Hudson (both aged eight)

HUNDREDS of people got into the festive spirit at Cannock Chase Council's lantern festivals. Two district parks played host to the parades.

The free events took place in a snowy Hednesford Park last Thursday (December 9) and Elmore Park in Rugeley the following day. Around 400 people enjoyed the festival at Hednesford, with around 500 people taking part in Rugeley.

Live music and entertainment added to the festivities with Cannock X Factor contestant Faye Bray performing her festive single Feels Like Christmas at the Rugeley festival.

A host of local bands and performers also entertained the crowds at

both events. There were also Christmas games, art workshops and food and drink on offer.

The festivals got under way with a magical lantern parade arriving at each park.

The council's community engagement officers had worked with children in primary schools on their lanterns.

Giant

Community groups, schools and organisations from across the district also showed off the giant lanterns they had created with the help of the council's Community Wellbeing Officers and local artists.

Environment leader Councillor Tony Williams said: "It was great to see our parks being used for big community events like the lantern festi-

vals and to see so many people taking part.

"Our parks are wonderful spaces for the whole community to enjoy, so they were an ideal setting for the festivals – and they both looked fantastic with the giant lanterns."

Culture and Sport Leader Councillor Mick Grocott, who opened the Elmore Park festival in his role as chairman of Rugeley Town Council, said: "The aim of the lantern festivals was to bring communities together for some winter fun, and we certainly achieved this."

"I'd like to thank everyone who helped to make the festivals such a huge success."

"It was great to see so many people at the events on the night and the giant lanterns were simply magical."



Faye Bray performs 'It Feels Like Christmas' at Elmore Park in Rugeley



Community engagement officer Kitty Leach with brothers James and Christopher Astbury



Jack Johnson (aged eight), a pupil at Western Springs Primary School



Santa meets Gabriel Scutto (aged seven) and Councillor Gordon Alcott



Faye Bray Councillor Mick Grocott

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Water gushes down Market Street, Hednesford

Split in mains leads to flood chaos in town

HOMES and businesses were left without water and shop staff put up temporary barriers to stop flooding after a water main burst in Hednesford town centre.

Water gushing out of the main ran down Market Street, causing a two day closure for repairs to take place.

The burst under a section of pavement near to the William Hill bookmakers happened at about 3.30pm on Friday (December 10) with the water not being fully restored until 8.30am the following day.

It is believed the water pipe had burst due to rising temperatures. The pipe had a six-inch split and the local drains struggled to cope with the flow of water. South Stafford-

shire Water received 35 calls from people who had lost their water supply at around 3.30pm. Most had the supply restored during the evening.

Water company spokesman Colin Weyper said "We get an increase in these problems in the winter, but not normally this early. It's the first real thaw we've had."

Staff at William Hill used sand and wooden boards to try to divert the running water away from the shop.

Linda Whitehouse, from Bromley's Estate Agents, in Market Street, said: "It was absolutely horrendous. It was coming down quite thick - like a river."

She said they had been worried the drains would not be able to cope with the volume of water.

Big freeze leads to burst pipe call-outs

CANNOCK Chase Council housing staff dealt with 50 water pipe bursts at its tenants' homes which were caused by freezing temperatures, in just one day.

Council spokesman Jamie Summerfield said that following the extremely low temperatures on December 6 and 7, they had dealt with a large number of emergency call-outs.

On the Tuesday the figure reached 50. And the number of plumbers working in the evening was increased from one to four.

He said: "This was to make sure we got to

properties as quickly as we possibly could," he said.

One of the tenants affected was Trevor John of Newman Grove, Rugeley.

A pipe burst in his attic on the Tuesday afternoon (December 7).

Mr John and his wife Lynn claimed they had to wait more than four hours for the council to send an emergency plumber.

He said the water flooded the front room of the semi-detached house where they had lived for 15 years with a number of pets including two dogs and a rat.

Mr John said they were unable to turn off the stop tap until a plumber turned up.

"We were very unhappy with how long we had to wait. The council did not treat it as an emergency," he added.

Mr Summerfield said: "Mr John told us about his burst pipe at 4.15pm and we were at the property at around 6pm to carry out repairs."

"We are expecting more burst water pipes as temperatures begin to rise, as leaks will be revealed when the ice melts."

"We've had to reschedule some lower-priority housing repairs because of the number of emergency call-outs."

"We will call any tenant affected directly to arrange a new appointment."

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Are you thinking about divorce?

The decision to divorce is a major hurdle to clear and has lasting consequences. If you are considering divorce then you need to be sure that it is the best course of action.

Should you decide that divorce is what you want then I would recommend seeking legal advice, not only to guide you through the process, but to help you seek a fair and sensible settlement.

To get divorced you must have been married for more than a year and the process itself follows a number of set steps which need to be adhered to depending on your situation.

The administrative function of divorce can be relatively

straightforward, problems can arise if documents are incorrectly completed or if there are disagreements between the parties involved. A solicitor can complete all the relevant paperwork and provide advice and guidance at each step of the process.

Instructing a solicitor can remove the stress of dealing with the procedural aspects, at what is an emotional time, and if necessary a solicitor can also handle all communications with the other spouse and his/her solicitor.

In terms of timescales if the other spouse does not contest the divorce, then the process of divorce should take around six months. If

the parties cannot agree or there are delays in the completion and submission of papers to the Courts, then this can extend the process. If there are proceedings around children or finances then these will run separately and can take longer than six months.

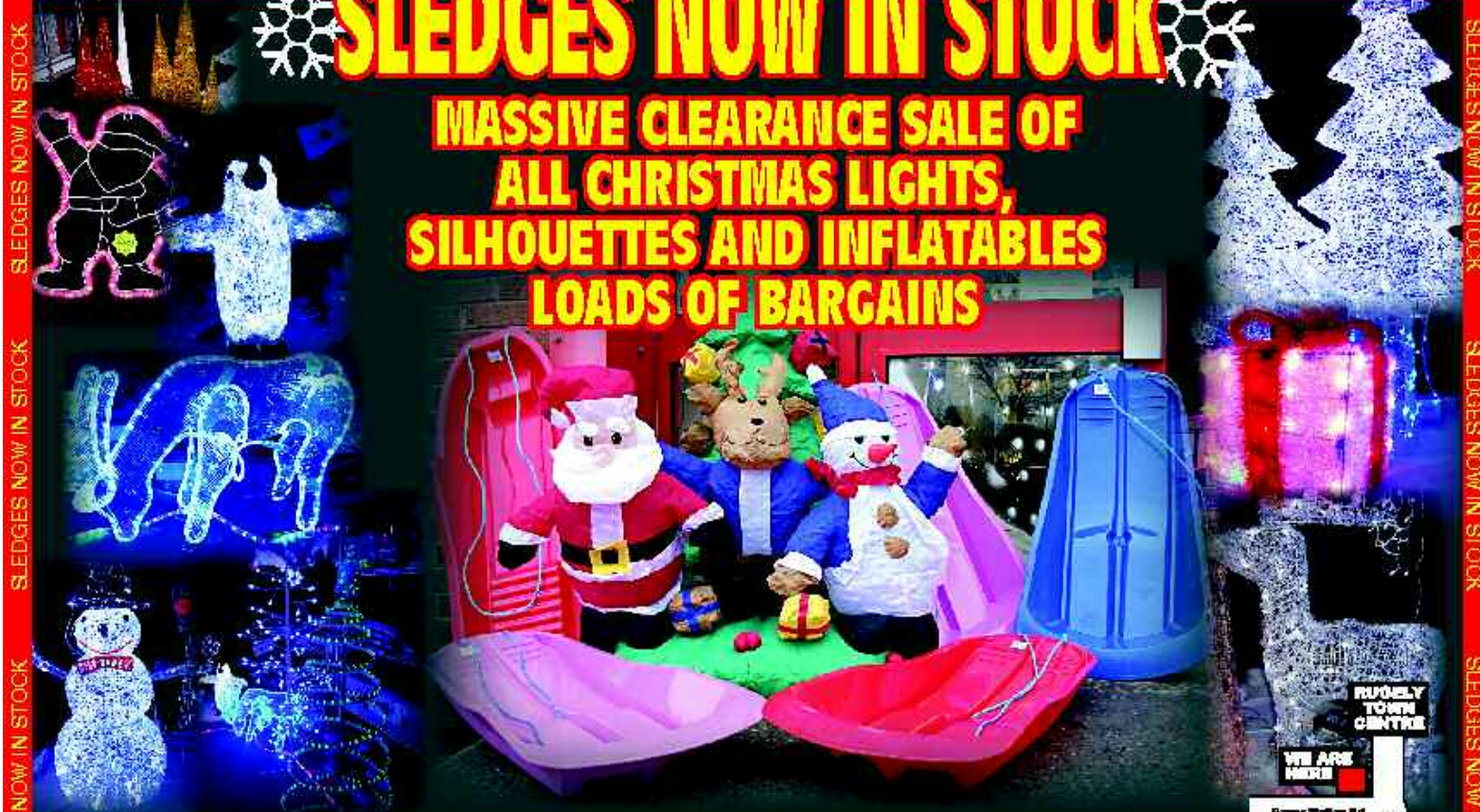
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Lonesome Linnie needs a home



Head nurse Nicky Wellings appealing for the owner of a Staffordshire Dalmatian cross to come forward

A VETERINARY practice is appealing for the owners of a white dalmatian cross to come forward after it was hit by a car while running loose near Huntington.

The dog – nicknamed Linnie by staff – was struck on Stafford Road at about 9am on Friday, December 3.

The car involved in the collision did not stop, but a passing motorist stepped in and took the dog to EC Straiton, in Cannock Road, Penkridge, on the same morning.

Staff have been unable to trace her owners and she may have to be adopted. Veterinary nurse Caroline Bromley said: "She has no collar and no electronic microchip. But we believe she does have an owner because she's very friendly, very loving and has been well fed."

Anybody who may know the rightful owner is asked to call 01785 712235.

Dragnet widens in hunt for murderer

DETECTIVES investigating the murder of a Chasetown man in his bed say the answer to the savage crime may lie in the Black Country.

Richard Deakin, aged 27, was shot in the chest in his bedroom in Meadow Street on July 5. Staffordshire Police major investigation department have suggested that those responsible may have links to the Wolverhampton, Tipton or Coseley areas. DCI Dave Garrett, leading the inquiry, said: "We have been working closely with colleagues from West Midlands Police.

"We have several active lines of inquiry which suggest Richard's killers could be from the Wolverhampton, Tipton and Coseley area.

"I would urge people who live in the Black Country to ring us if they know anything about

Richard's death." Two Bilston men aged 22 and 23 have been arrested in connection with the death of the businessman and are on police bail pending further inquiries.

On the day of the murder, the offenders used a black Vauxhall Corsa which is believed to have had two men inside – a driver and a front-seat passenger.

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Sat 25th	Christmas Service	10.30 am
Sun 26th	Joint Service	10.30 am
Fri 31st	Watchnight Service	11.15 pm

CHADSMOOR BETHANY (Baptist)

Sun 19th	Nativity Christmas Service	10.45 am
Sat 25th	Christmas Morning Meditation	10.30 am

HATHERTON ST SAVIOUR'S (CofE)

Sun 19th	Nine Lessons and Carols	11.00 am
Fri 24th	The First Communion of Christmas	11.30 pm
Sun 26th	Parish Communion (for the Feast of St Stephen)	11.00 am

HEATH HAYES ST JOHN'S (CofE)

Sun 19th	Candlelight Carol Service (with Bourne)	6.30 pm
Fri 24th	Crib Service	4.30 pm
Fri 24th	Midnight Mass	11.30 pm
Fri 25th	Family Communion Service	10.00 am

HEATH HAYES BOURNE (Methodist)

Sat 25th	Christmas Day Family Service	9.15 am
Sun 26th	Morning Worship	10.30 am

BRIDGTOWN BETHEL (Methodist)

Sun 19th	Nativity Service	6.00 pm
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CANNOCK ST BARNABAS (CofE)

Sun 19th	Carol Service	4.00 pm
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CANNOCK ST LUKE'S (CofE)

Sun 19th	Carols by Candlelight	5.30 pm
Fri 24th	Crib Service	5.30 pm
Fri 24th	First Communion of Christmas	11.30 pm
Sat 25th	Holy Communion	8.00 am
Sat 25th	Family Communion	10.00 am

CANNOCK ST MARY'S (RC)

Fri 24th	Children's Mass	4.00 pm
Fri 24th	Carols & Readings	7.00 pm
Fri 24th	Vigil Mass	7.30 pm
Sat 25th	Mass	10.00 am

CANNOCK MILL ST (Methodist)

Sun 19th	Carol Service	11.00 am
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CANNOCK ST STEPHEN'S (Methodist)

Fri 17th	Songs for Christmas (tickets in advance)	7.30 pm
Sun 19th	Nativity Service	10.30 am
Sun 19th	Carols by Candlelight	6.30 pm
Fri 24th	Celebration Communion	11.30 pm
Sat 25th	Christmas Celebration	10.30 am
Sun 26th	St Stephen's Day Service	10.30 am

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Fri 24th	Midnight Communion	11.00 pm
Sat 25th	Morning Praise	10.00 am



Council hopes to avoid giving staff the sack



West Midlands bench pressing competition winners Brian Mills and Lee Smith with their medals

Pals press home their advantage

TWO friends returned home successful from a pressing engagement.

Lee Smith from Rugeley, and Brian Mills, of Handsacre, won their respective groups at the West Midlands Bench Press competition in Birmingham. Breaking the West Midlands record, Lee, aged 38, won the 100 kilo weight group, pressing 180kg. He is ranked fourth in the world and is a former British champion in the 80 and 90kg weight groups. Brian, also 38, is the current British champion. He won the 90 kilo weight group, pressing 140kg.

Brian is a teacher in Lichfield and is also the former West Midlands Bench Press champion.

CANNOCK Chase Council still hopes to avoid compulsory job losses – despite changing its policy to allow staff to take voluntary redundancy.

The authority could not set a budget for 2011/12 until finding out this week how much Government funding it would lose over the next four years.

The budget is expected to be put to the Full Council on February 3 when details of any redundancies will be confirmed.

Leader Councillor Neil Stanley said local government was facing reduction of about 28 per cent over four years.

He said the cabinet's priority was to protect frontline services.

The council agreed to amend its early retirement policy to allow voluntary redundancies and authorise the chief executive to issue notice to affected staff, allowing job losses to take effect from March 31.

Councillor Stanley said once the council started to consider potential redundancies it had to begin consultation with staff who might be at risk. He stressed not all those notified would lose their jobs and ideally the council hoped to avoid making compulsory redundancies.

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GAMES

Sims get the party started

THE SIMS 3 (12, EA)
THE hugely popular PC game has had previous incarnations for PSP, PS2 and Wii but with Sims 3 for consoles the all-conquering life simulation finally makes it onto the serious gamers' machines - Xbox 360 and PS3.

And it's long overdue, giving thousands of family laptops and PCs a well-earned rest.

The Sims has been a massive success on PC, with three main versions plus lots of add-on packs to enhance lifestyles with lots of extra goods and abilities (and weird stuff for vampires and aliens, etc).

It has even spawned its own language, Simlish, based on the gobbledegook spouted by the virtual beings.

More than a million people globally are happy to dedicate many hours to creating and watching over their Sim creations - it's a control freak's dream! - but it also has a wicked sense of humour.

Sims 3 imports all that's good about the PC version and, a few dodgy graphics aside, enhances it with new abilities including 'Karma Powers' in which Sims can get lucky, be blessed with instant beauty or cursed with 'epic fail'.

Another big plus with the console version is that it has far more connectivity than PC, allowing players to share their creations, download

content from others and even share their Sims' big moments via Facebook if they've got an account with the PlayStation Network or Xbox LIVE.

Owners of the DS version have the cool ability to use the stylus to sculpt their Sims' facial features... you can make your own Sharon Osbourne!

THE SIMS 3 LATE NIGHT (12, EA)

THE Sims can really get their party started now that this latest expansion pack for the computer version lets them loose on a neon-lit vibrant downtime area. Here they will rub shoulders with celebs and even get a chance to become one themselves.

Your Sims will get in to the most exclusive places and enjoy hefty discounts but they will also be pestered by fans and followed by the paparazzi.

Bars, parties, gigs with your own Sims rock band, all become available and new career opportunities include rock star or the bar's best cocktail making 'mixologist'.

Watch out for tough bouncers though and, if you hang out on the wild side, you may become a vampire.

These trendy urban Sims live in apartments, relaxing in hot tubs and dance the night away at rooftop penthouse parties... you could get envious. You will need 'The Sims 3' original game (it's available for PC and Mac) before installing the expansion pack.

Leon Burakowski



Getting friendly during a Late Night out in The Sims 3 latest expansion pack for computer based fans of the popular life simulation game. But now those who prefer console gaming can join the Sims universe via The Sims 3 for Xbox 360, PS3, Nintendo DS and Wii



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A tippie fit for a prince

ROYAL ALE "WILL WINS-HER" DARK AMBER 5.2%

Pauline Farrell with the William Wins-Her ale

THE first pints of a Staffordshire brewery's tribute to the Royal engagement have been served up.

Quartz Brewery, at Kings Bromley, has christened its latest tippie William Wins-Her in recognition of the Prince's engagement to Kate Middleton.

The 5.2 per cent full-bodied ale was served up for the first time at the

Quartz shop at the Heart of the Country Village, just off the A38 near Lichfield.

The Royal-inspired name was chosen from hundreds of entries on the brewery's Facebook and Twitter pages.

Anna Hewitt came up with the winning title and will receive a five litre mini cask of the beer.

Soul star tops the bill in new spring season

SOUL legend Ben E King and TV star Neil Morrissey are just two of the big names lined up to perform at the Prince of Wales Centre in 2011.

The spring programme for Cannock Chase Council's theatre in Church Street, Cannock, has been revealed, with a packed programme of music, drama, comedy and all-round entertainment.

Ben E King will play live on Tuesday March 8 alongside Gary US Bonds in the Great American Songbook.

Men Behaving Badly star Neil Morrissey appears at the venue on Thursday May 5. Other shows lined up for next year include music from Steeleye Span on March 28, The Searchers on April 2 and comedy from Roy 'Chubby' Brown on June 22 and 23.

The programme is available from the theatre and at locations around the district and at www.cannockchase.gov.uk/princeofwales

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The Big Silence. (F) 9.30 Rick
Stein's Cornish Christmas. (F)
9.30 BBC News.

(1975) Thriller coped, starring Paul Newman. **2.00** Medium (F) **2.00** BBC Movie **3.00** Close

Sons and Daughters 3:30 ITV
Lightscreen 3:30 ITV Morning
Music

overlasting Piece. (2000)

200 *Harb's Holpline.* (P) **2.99**
The Historical Group. (P) **2.99**

Dreese (2008) A single woman acting as a bridesmaid at her sister's wedding is secretly in love with the groom. Because closely with

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SPORTS PERSONALITY OF THE YEAR

BBC1, 7pm

Wherever this show is broadcast, fans know that Christmas is just around the corner – but who will be celebrating the festive season with a shiny new trophy on the mantelpiece as well as a turkey in the oven? In the running (and on the punt) for the main award are the likes of Jessica Ennis, Tom Daley, AP McCoy and Graeme McDowell, and expect to see reports about serious sporting events from the past 12 months, such as the European Ryder Cup team triumph over the US, this year's Wimbledon and England's flop during the World Cup in South Africa.

6.00 Breakfast 24/5 Match of the Day (R) **6.00 The Andrew Marr Show** 10.00 Fern Britton Meets Sir Cliff Richard **11.00 Country Tracks** 12.00 BBC News **12.05** **Wicki Weather of the Midlands** **12.25** **EatEnders** **2.25** **Drop Zone** **4.25** **Drop Zone** **4.25** **Lifeline** **6.25** **Songs of Praise** **8.30** **BBC News** **Regional News** **Weather** **8.30** **Jinnig's Food Factory** (R)

6.00 Countryfile Winter Special The team experience winter on North Uist in the Outer Hebrides, where Matt Baker learns a traditional Scottish dance and John Craven tries his hand at bartering for goods.

2.00 Sports Personality of the Year Sue Barker, Gary Lineker and Jake Humphrey present from Birmingham's LG Arena. Includes a review of the year's highlights, before the 5th recipient of the award is announced. Subsequent programme subject to change.

2.00 The Apprentice The two finalists launch a new high-quality alcoholic beverage before Alan Sugar reveals who he has chosen as the winner of this year's competition. Last in the series.

11.00 BBC News **11.25** **News** **11.55** **News** **12.00** **News** **12.05** **News** **12.10** **News** **12.15** **News** **12.20** **News** **12.25** **News** **12.30** **News** **12.35** **News** **12.40** **News** **12.45** **News** **12.50** **News** **12.55** **News** **13.00** **News** **13.05** **News** **13.10** **News** **13.15** **News** **13.20** **News** **13.25** **News** **13.30** **News** **13.35** **News** **13.40** **News** **13.45** **News** **13.50** **News** **13.55** **News** **14.00** **News** **14.05** **News** **14.10** **News** **14.15** **News** **14.20** **News** **14.25** **News** **14.30** **News** **14.35** **News** **14.40** **News** **14.45** **News** **14.50** **News** **14.55** **News** **15.00** **News** **15.05** **News** **15.10** **News** **15.15** **News** **15.20** **News** **15.25** **News** **15.30** **News** **15.35** **News** **15.40** **News** **15.45** **News** **15.50** **News** **15.55** **News** **16.00** **News** **16.05** 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Friday

BBC1 6.00 Breakfast 9.00 CBBC 10.00
Children's Saturday Kitchen 11.00
Film The Santa Clause 2 (2006)
Disney comedy adventure sequel, starring Tim
Allen. 10.55 The Big Bang Theory 11.00
Weather 1.05 Only Fools and Horses 1.30
2.35 Jimmy's Food Factory (R) 3.05 Film Car
(2006) Reunites Peter dinklage adventure, with
the voices of Owen Wilson and Paul Newman.
4.55 Red Eye (R) 5.15 Film The Chorus
(2004) French comedy about a teacher in a
French adventure sequel, starring Jean Reno.
7.00 BBC News 7.25 Regional News Programme
Weather 8.00 EndEnergie 8.30 My Family 8.55
9.00 Haze 9.15 Got News for You 9.30
9.50 The 11th Hour 10.00 The 11th Hour
The National Lottery 2.5 Children's Millions
11.30 BBC News Weather 11.55 Minkins Hat
Weatherline 11.55 Film The Movie Pit (1984)

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ITV1 6.00 *Daybreak*, 6.30 *Lorraine*, 8.25 *The Morning Christmas Crackers*, 9.00 *Flint Cooper* (1985) Family comedy, starring Christina Ricci, 12.30 *ITV News*, *Weather*, 2.30 *Regional News*, *Weather*, 3.55 *Flint Miracle of 34th Street* (1994), 4.30 *Flint The Queen* (2000), 5.55 *Countryside at Christmas*, 5.55 *The Santa Flew with John Sergeant*, 6.50 *ITV News*, *Weather*, 7.30 *Emmerdale*, 7.30 *Coronation Street*, 8.30 *You're Been Framed* (Christmas), (R), 9.30 *Coronation Street*, 10.30 *Claydon's Christmas*, 11.30 *ITV News*, *Weather*, 12.30 *ITV News*, 1.15 *Flint The Holiday* (2000), 2.15 *Christmas: The Angels*, 3.00 *ITV News*, *Weather*, 3.55 *Flint Dead Calm* (1988), 4.30 *ITV News*, *Weather*, 5.30 *ITV Morning News*.

Channel 4 **6:00** *Small Minded* (R) **6:05** *The People People* (R) **6:15** *Backlist* (R) **6:30** *Freddie Spearhead: Zorro Reader* (R) **7:35** *Concert to John* (R) **8:00** *Cheryl Cole's Other Politics* (R) **8:05** *T4: Friends* (R) **8:30** *T4: Friends* (R) **9:00** *T4: Friends* (R) **9:05** *T4: Friends* (R) **9:10** *T4: Friends* (R) **9:15** *T4: Friends* (R) **9:20** *T4: Friends* (R) **9:25** *T4: Friends* (R) **9:30** *T4: Friends* (R) **9:35** *T4: Friends* (R) **9:40** *T4: Friends* (R) **9:45** *T4: Friends* (R) **9:50** *T4: Friends* (R) **9:55** *T4: Friends* (R) **10:00** *T4: Friends* (R) **10:05** *T4: Friends* (R) **10:10** *T4: Friends* (R) **10:15** *T4: Friends* (R) **10:20** *T4: Friends* (R) **10:25** *T4: Friends* (R) **10:30** *T4: Friends* (R) **10:35** *T4: Friends* (R) **10:40** *T4: Friends* (R) **10:45** *T4: Friends* (R) **10:50** *T4: Friends* (R) **10:55** *T4: Friends* (R) **11:00** *T4: Friends* (R) **11:05** *T4: Friends* (R) **11:10** 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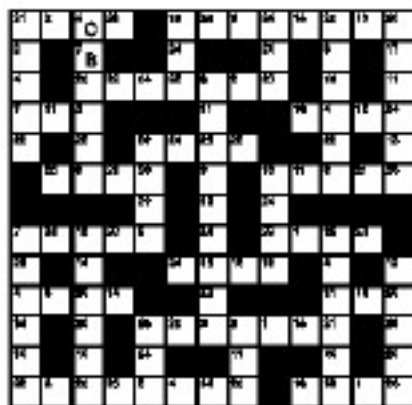

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Brain Gym

No.095

Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a letter in the word. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the grid to start you off.



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1 D F Y Q K J L E G M B T
W S Z C X V A O R U H N P



RainToday?

Don't get caught out in the rain or snow
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Double Crossword

Choose either grid A or grid B - both fit the same grid.

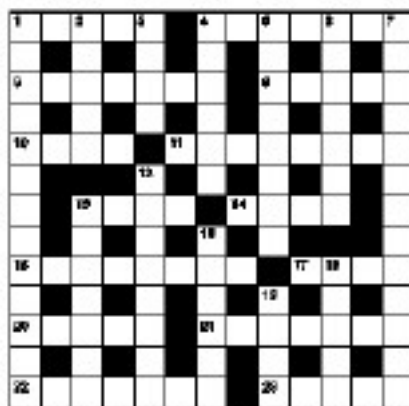
Cryptic Clues

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Sudoku

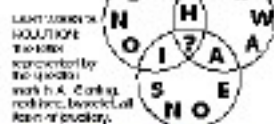
Fill in the grid below so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

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Circlegram

Replace the question mark with a letter so that the letters within each circle can be arranged to form words in a common theme. What are the three words, and the letter represented by the question mark?



MERE PARK Garden Centre Christmas Wonderland



Spread the cost...
Christmas package 1

1 x 210 Imperial pine tree
1 x 240 LED lights
1 x 1000 worth of decorations
Total: £250.00
Deposit: £25.00 - £50.00
Balance: £200.00
over 12 months £16.67 per month

Spread the cost...
Christmas package 2

1 x 210 Imperial pine tree
1 x 240 LED lights
1 x 1000 worth of decorations
Total: £250.00
Deposit: £25.00 - £50.00
Balance: £200.00
over 12 months £16.67 per month

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8am-11am
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Christmas light deals...
• Best range in the area
• Perfect choice
• Indoor and outdoor range
Upto 50% off
selected lights

Selected Baubles
BUY 2 GET 1 FREE

5ft Boston Pine
SAVE \$5.00
Was £24.99
NOW £19.99

PROGRAMME OF EVENTS
THURSDAY 16TH
Food & Drink Festivity Day
12 noon-4 pm
SATURDAY 18TH
Peter Bishop organist
12 noon-4 pm
SUNDAY 19TH
Tall Christmas
2 pm-4 pm

Fat Snax
Tub of 50
RRP £12.99
Our Price
£9.99

Daily Seed Blend
£4.99 each
BUY 2 GET 1 FREE

5ft Boston Pine
SAVE \$5.00
Was £24.99
NOW £19.99

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BUY ONE
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Christmas Menu
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(Monday to Friday only)

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CREDIT
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The Trentham Estate

Light up your Winter

Trentham Shopping Village and Garden Centre are twinkling with festive ambience and bursting with glittering gifts galore to delight your loved ones.

It's the weekend before Christmas and the Victorians will be amongst us bringing traditional festive cheer with them.

Santa & Mrs Claus are in their grotto 17-19 & 22-24 December where children can experience the magic of meeting Santa. The real reindeer will be here 21-24 December... preparing for their big night!

The Shopping Village is open 10am-6pm Mon-Sat, 10am-6pm Sun. Late night shopping until 8pm on 22 December Christmas Eve and Boxing Day 10am-4pm.

Go for an exhilarating whirl around Trentham's real ice rink 11am-8pm sessions 17-23 December, 11am-3pm Christmas Eve and throughout the holidays.

It's Ice Disco on Wednesday evenings 22 & 29 and Fire Performers will be warming up the crowds 17-23 December.

Please call us to reserve tickets (Adult £8.26, Child age 5-15 £6.60, Concession £7.75, Family £28, Spectator £3). Discounts available for pre-booked groups of 20+ or enjoy exclusive hire of the ice rink from £160 per session. The ice rink is at Trentham until 27 February 2011.

Check out latest information and our fun-packed events programme at www.trentham.co.uk

Add to this Trentham Gardens with its sparkling displays of frosty elegance and Christmas Wishing Tree Nature Trail and a visit to Trentham will light up your Winter!

Merry Christmas!



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www.trentham.co.uk

**Bring this advert with you to receive
10% discount on day admission
to Trentham Gardens this winter**

Code: X151210 Expires: 31.3.11

*all performances and attractions are weather permitting

thechronicle



Kerry Ingram as Matilda

Minchin magic for a marvellous Matilda

Roald Dahl's Matilda: A Musical, Royal Shakespeare Company, The Courtyard, Stratford-upon-Avon

ROALD Dahl's darkly humorous story of a child genius who gets revenge on a loveless family and cruel headmistress is brought to life in this vibrant and memorable production by the RSC.

The witty and tuneful songs by Australian comedian and composer Tim Minchin are superb, and superbly performed by a well-choreographed cast in one of the most cleverly designed shows I have ever seen.

It is filled with 'how did they do that' moments,

such as when the monstrous headmistress Miss Trunchbull twirls a schoolgirl by her pigtail and a schoolboy apparently devours a giant chocolate cake.

Adaptor Dennis Kelly has enhanced rather than condensed Dahl's original story, which is a celebration of the power of books and a condemnation of selfish adults.

Stand out performances included Paul Kaye as Matilda's dodgy car dealer dad and Josie Walker as her ballroom dancing obsessed mum, both incredibly loud and venal. Kaye specialises in these manic comic roles but also brings a flicker of humanity to his dreadful dad when he shows one brief moment of regret at being parted from Matilda.

Bertie Carvel in drag as the no-neck Olympic hammer throwing Miss Trunchbull was all the more scary for the measured, clipped way he delivered his lines, hinting at a rage simmering underneath. Her maxim is that to teach children, you must first break their spirit.

Lauren Ward was in fine voice as the loving and encouraging Miss Honey, the teacher who finally overcomes her fear to stand up for Matilda. The moment when Matilda hugs Miss Honey brings a tear to the eye.

Genius

But most praise must go to Kerry Ingram, one of three girls playing Matilda at different performances. A little girl with a big voice, she radiated vulnerability blended with determination and fortitude. She was marvellous.

It doesn't take a genius mind like Matilda's to work out that this show should transfer to the West End.

If you love Roald Dahl's stories, if you love a great show, you should catch Matilda before it ends its Stratford run on January 30.

Leon Burakowski

You couldn't wish for a better panto



Christopher Biggins in sequins and (inset) Paul Zerdin with Sam

EVEN before I got there I just knew this panto was going to be good – and I wasn't wrong.

I'd seen the interview with 'Jungle King' Christopher Biggins before Aladdin opened at the Grand Theatre in Wolverhampton and you could see he was relishing the role as panto dame. And as Widow Twankey he certainly does add his own special magic.

There are the thrills and excitement of the 3D effects which are literally out of this world. Pick up a pair of glasses on your way in and be transported into a different sphere.

But it is the performances that really cast the magic spell, no-one more so than Paul Zerdin as Aladdin. He has already built up an amazing reputation and it's easy to see why.

Whoever thought of bringing in a ventriloquist and his 'mate' Sam was certainly no dummy. Paul is so good that in the quick-fire scenes he never faulted. Anyone doing one voice would have struggled but he maintained the two superbly. Quite incredible.

The pedigree of some of the other performers such as James Barron as Abanazar and Stephen McCarthy as The Emperor is excellent and the interaction with the members of the audience who were brought up on stage, one begrudgingly agreeing to 'strip off' and the other being used as the ventriloquist's dummy, was very well done.

After nearly three hours of non-stop laughter and amazement I can honestly say it's the best panto I have ever seen. Well done Grand!

It's on until Sunday, January 30 so make a panto ticket one of your three wishes!

SUE ATTWATER

Laugh a lot at Spamalat

Monty Python's Spamalat, Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

HAVING spent an hour stuck in traffic and then had my face stung by the sub-zero temperature, it is fair to say I wasn't inclined to Always Look on the Bright Side of Life.

But two hours after curtain up on Spamalat, I was merrily singing along with this ironic

Python anthem. The musical mayhem that is Spamalat, "lovingly ripped off" from the film Monty Python and the Holy Grail by Eric Idle and John Du Prez, is a joyously silly romp through Arthurian legend – featuring a killer rabbit, Finnish folk dancers, knights who say 'ni', dancing plague victims, rude Frenchmen and a personal appearance by God on video (looking a lot like Eric Idle).

A small but hard working cast give themselves over entirely to the daftness including Matthew Kelly as a perplexed King Arthur, I'd Do Anything winner Jodie Prenger as a showbiz diva Lady of the Lake and Todd Carty as trusty servant Patsy.

The knights to remember are played by the hilarious trio of Samuel Holmes, David Langham and Simon Lipkin.

The show is also a good natured mickey take of West End musicals and throws in a few topical and Brummie orientated gags too. It continues at the Alex in January 1.

LB



Dancing at the knight club – a scene from delightfully daft Spamalat

Pixie has a Lott going for her

Pixie Lott, Civic Hall, Wolverhampton

WITH soulful voice and a maturity that belies her tender age, quite a Lott has happened to Victoria Louise – much of it during this year.

At the age of just 19, Pixie has racked up three number ones, a tour with Rihanna, been an X Factor judge, landed her movie

debut and now her first headline tour. And a packed house were there to witness it at the Civic Hall.

After starting the set with Mama Do, the song that catapulted her to stardom, hits such as Gravity, Broken Arrow, Turn It Up and Cry Me Out followed – all beautifully performed – as were covers of the likes of Plan B, Cee Lo Green and

Kings of Leon. A superbly delivered Motown and soul medley were included, as well as a number of quick-fire costume changes, though the on-stage dancers were often a distraction.

A snow storm in the encore preceded the finale of Boys and Girls, complete in cat suit.

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Peonies are among some of the first to peep through after winter



The bright and colourful hellebores will add appeal to any garden

Varieties that bring colour to the garden all year round

WITH Christmas not too far off, a gift token for a garden centre may be among your presents.

If you're struggling to think about what plants to buy with it, try something that lasts a while, is a pretty colour, or suits your garden type well.

To start the year a hellebore would be ideal as it's not too big and would fit neatly in a shady place.

John Massy has a marvellous selection at Ashwoods Nursery in Stourbridge including frilly ones in gorgeous colours, or simple single ones. They last for a long period of time when very little else is growing and the plants go on to get bigger each year so that eventually you can give one away to a friend.

Soon after the hellebore season the paeonies begin to peep through. The best variety for beginners is the paeony delawayii, which is grown easily from seed, though it takes a long time to germinate. It grows a bit



GARDENING WITH PAT EDWARDS

each year to eventually make quite a large shrub. The blossoms are big, red and cover the bush while the leaves are also very attractive, so even when the flowers have gone the bush still looks good.

Clematis almondi is unusual with evergreen leaves and white or pink flowers. It can cover an enormous area, so needs plenty of room to spread.

The flowers are scented, and 1-2 inches across early in the season, so if you have an unsightly shed or a bare wall to cover this is an ideal variety.

During spring, the shade of tree is pleasant to sit

under and there are many crab apples to choose from. One type has two seasons and is called Red Siberian which has appealing pink flowers followed by red berries in the autumn.

There are many different types of honesty plants which are an old-fashioned dual-purpose plant, grown partly for its fragrant bright flowers in spring and early summer, but also for its unique seed-heads which are oval and translucent.

They seed themselves each year and usual colours include mauve or white, with variegated or plain leaves but most of these are annuals.

The lunaria rediviva variety is perennial, so keeps growing with pale pink flowers topping off a neat little bush well worth having reappear each year.

My last suggestion is cestrum palqui, which needs a south facing wall or fence to climb up. The flowers are yellow and it dies down in the winter.

It also has a rather nasty smell, so ideally needs to be grown at the far end of the garden, not chosen to decorate the house.



Honesty plants are grown for their pretty flowers and unusual pods

Don't let your sparky blow a fuse

If you're a fussy customer and can't make your mind up when you've employed tradesman, you may be heading down a rocky path!

According to a recent survey by the ECA (Electrical Contractors Association), changing the job brief is a sure way to ensure your electrician blows a fuse.

Householders who don't stick to the plan are even more annoying than those who try to knock the costs down, according to a recent poll of ECA members.

Giving the tradesman an opportunity to put forward their case, the members of the ECA were asked what customers habits were the most annoying.

Being a "know it all" also scored high on the list of annoying habits as the experts definitely do not welcome advice from customers who think they know how to do the job better, particularly as in many cases they are responsible for "botching the job" in the first place!

If you really want to make the tradesman happy offer them a drink and keep the conversation short, as, not surprisingly, refreshments are always welcome

but "constant chatter and interruptions" are definitely not.

Steve Roberts, West Midlands Regional Manager ECA, explained:

"The survey was a light-hearted study of the habits of electricians and their customers, however, this question did throw up a serious point that all too often householders don't really understand what is involved when it comes to electrical work.

Decide

"For example rewiring a house is a completely different job than changing sockets, and involves a lot more time and work."

The advice from the ECA is to decide exactly what work you require when you brief your electrician and, if you do change your mind, let them know before they turn up to do the job. It will probably save you money in the long term.

• For more information about the ECA and to find an ECA electrician, visit www.eca.co.uk



If you want to keep your electrician on your side keep him topped up with regular supplies of drinks – and possibly biscuits – but don't keep interrupting him with endless chatter as he needs to concentrate

ELECTRICIAN SURVEY

Question

What is the most annoying in a customer?

Response

Changing the brief after the work has begun – **30 per cent**

Trying to knock costs down – **25 per cent**

Think they know how to do the job better – **13 per cent**

Won't admit they botched job in the first place – **11 per cent**

Constant chatter and interruptions – **7 per cent**

Not offering them any refreshments – **5 per cent**

None of above – **9 per cent**

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Stephen keeps Wolves in the Hunt

BRING on the Baggies.

As preparation for derbies go, it didn't get any better for Wolves than this.

A win, a first clean sheet in 23 games and all amid a shocking list of injuries and absences that robbed manager Mick McCarthy of 11 players.

And yet despite seemingly everything going wrong for them, somehow, from somewhere, Wolves produced a magnificent performance brimming with character to confound their critics.

No wonder chairman Steve Morgan came out on the pitch at the end to embrace the players and manager.

They might not be out of the relegation zone yet – the difference is still a point to safety after this vital win. But they didn't play like a team in trouble.

Shorn of Kevin Doyle and Matt Jarvis the day before the game, as well as Steven Mouyokolo, Michael Mancienne and David Jones in the days leading up to it, it would have been easier for those players left to feel sorry for themselves.

But they rolled up their sleeves to richly earn their victory.

Boss Mick McCarthy revealed his strategy afterwards: "Rather than bemoan our injury list, I prefer to big up

WOLVES 1 BLUES 0

the lads who are playing, and that's what I did all week," he said.

No one gave more than Stephen Ward, who more than two-and-a-half years after his last game up front, had a stormer alongside Sylvan Ebanks-Blake.

McCarthy's depleted side were up for it from the first whistle.

Wolves had a bright start and only an excellent fingertip save from Ben Foster prevented them from taking a 10th minute lead from Dave Edwards' glancing header.

Thirty seconds later, Foster was in action again, to deny Stephen Hunt from point-blank range.

Ebanks-Blake was denied again in the 37th minute with a fierce effort palmed away by Foster at his near post.

And after dominating the first half, there was little surprise when Wolves got the goal their play richly deserved.

Edwards flicked on for Ebanks-Blake, who outmuscled Roger Johnson in a driving run before crossing to Hunt, and the former Hull winger got between Stephen Carr and Scott Dann to volley

home at the near post from five yards out. Wolves continued their onslaught at the start of the second half and Edwards missed a golden chance to make it 2-0 when he headed wide from Ward's cross.

McCarthy's side didn't let up and Nenad Milijas saw a curling free-kick saved at the foot of the post before Foster tipped his header over.

Wolves had a painful reminder that it wasn't all their way in the 68th minute when Christophe Berra collided with the post, stretching to reach Milijas' cross.

And as Wolves retreated to protect their lead, it was Berra, along with Richard Stearman, Ronald Zubar and George Elokobi who kept Blues at bay.

But for all Blues' belated huffing and puffing, keeper Wayne Hennessey didn't have a save to make.

Even the worrying appearance of Wolves' nemesis Kevin Phillips, 17 minutes from time, failed to inspire the lacklustre visitors.

This was a victory to savour. That's back-to-back home wins and there was more than a suggestion that this might be a platform for recovery. Which brings us to The Hawthorns, where there is no better place for Wolves to prove this was no false dawn.



Stephen Hunt celebrates his derby winner with Dave Edwards, Stephen Ward and George Elokobi

Albion's wait for win over Villans goes on

Hope from the Valley

SOMETIMES there is hope even in the darkest hour.

There have been few chinks of light in a season which has left Walsall staring down the barrel of a gun.

They have been bashed from pillar to post, questioned, knocked and criticised – justifiably so – but the Saddlers answered their detractors on Sunday.

A win at Charlton – courtesy of Matt Richards' excellent strike – can be the turning point of a wretched season.

Walsall are off the bottom of League One and five points from safety. If days like this cannot inspire, nothing will.

The Saddlers are still in the mire but this time you can say with a degree of certainty there is enough fight to survive.

Performances have improved – a defeat at Torquay aside – in the last month and perhaps a little momentum is now being gathered.

Two wins from their last three league games mark the start of a recovery and with the crucial Christmas period upon them, there is every chance the New Year will be a happy one.

The Saddlers haven't been upwardly mobile since the heady days of August, when they sat seventh, and their fate is not set in stone.

With 81 points to play for there are plenty of chances for redemption. But they are not off the hook and there are two real six-point-

CHARLTON 0 WALSALL 1

ers against Bristol Rovers and Dagenham on the horizon.

However impressive Sunday's result was it must be built on. If Chris Hutchings is the man to pilot the Saddlers to safety he will need more performances like the one witnessed at The Valley.

The manager's future will continue to be the topic of discussion, but performances and results will ease the pressure. And there was a great deal of heat on the team going into this lunchtime showdown.

The display was all the more admirable considering they would have watched in horror as Saturday's results rolled in.

With their relegation rivals piling on the pressure a result was imperative, the future looked bleak before kick-off.

After three wins in 19 games prior to the clash, few would have predicted the result. With the teams at opposite ends of the table, first-time viewers would have been forgiven for thinking the Addicks were the ones who started the game eight points from safety.

The hosts were dreadful, but that should not detract from a memorable Walsall performance in which they dominated every area. From minute one the robust Saddlers exuded confidence as Scott Wagstaff and Alex Nicholls traded half-chances before the visitors really took charge. Scrappy, nervous and disjointed, Charlton failed to get to grips

with the snappy Saddlers. The recalled Steve Jones was at the heart of every menacing move while Richards and Richard Taundry bossed the midfield.

Walsall batted away Charlton's lumbering and predictable attacks but, despite their dominance, failed to find the killer pass which would have exposed the woeful hosts in the first half. That said, there was an air of arrogance as the Saddlers grew in confidence.

The partnership of Andy Butler and Oliver Lancashire was impenetrable and the industrious Jones made the most of his first-team return. Jonny Brain, back for hamstring injury victim Jimmy Walker, was a spectator.

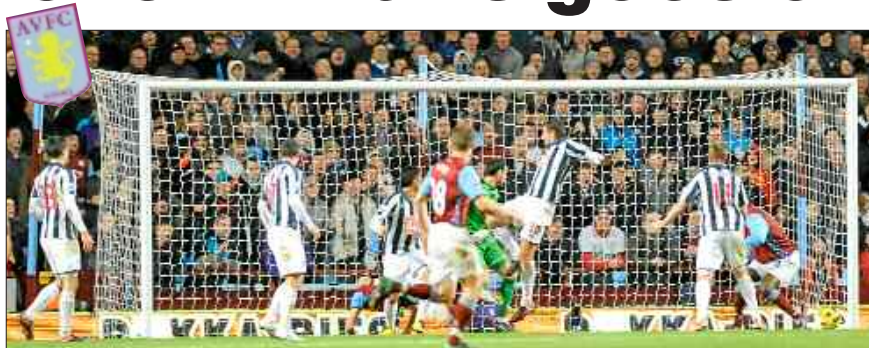
The break was greeted with a chorus of boos from the home fans and there was little for them to cheer in the second half as Walsall continued to press.

Will Grigg headed over before the Saddlers' dominance paid off when Richards drilled in from 18 yards following Gray's excellent knockdown.

The only surprise was it had taken Walsall 69 minutes to score and soon after the home fans were leaving. They had seen enough.

Substitute Jamie Paterson almost netted with his first touch before Nicholls fired straight at Rob Elliot when clean through in injury time.

That was testament to the Saddlers' performance and the five-point gap to safety now looks a bit more manageable.



Emile Heskey heads home Marc Albrighton's cross

VILLA 2 ALBION 1

primed to be the ones to break the curse.

Despite a hugely impressive first-half display at Villa Park, Albion could not find the special ingredient needed to turn possession and pressure into points.

Defeat at Villa Park was hardly a new experience for the travelling supporters, yet this latest disappointment must have hurt a little more than some of the others.

Because, for the first time in a generation, Baggies fans made the short trip across the West Midlands knowing they had a genuine chance of winning.

Ultimately the afternoon had a familiar flat ending for the visitors.

For half-an-hour Albion were the dominant force in what was, until half-time, a cracking West Midlands derby.

Di Matteo's side moved the ball with more precision than their hosts, attacked with more pace and invention and moved around the field with a confidence that bordered on a swagger.

The Baggies were brimming with belief while Villa's mental state looked so fragile that one goal for di Matteo's side might

have killed them off. It so nearly arrived when Jack-in-the-box winger Somen Tchoyi rattled the crossbar, while Chris Brunt and Marc-Antoine Fortune also went close.

Yet, in truth, the absence of injured spearhead Peter Odemwingie blunted the Baggies when they got within range of the Villa goal.

And the hosts' opener from Stewart Downing appeared to trigger a surprising loss of conviction in di Matteo's men.

So much so that they largely failed to get started in the second half until Emile Heskey's close-range header doubled the Villa lead and effectively put the match out of Albion's reach.

James Morrison's wasteful shot wide just before Heskey's goal was the only chance for the Baggies until Paul Scharner headed his second goal in three matches from a Brunt corner in the final minute.

Jerome Thomas might have rescued a point in stoppage time but his shot from a tight angle drifted over, meaning that so much early promise gave way to a depressingly familiar derby-day ending for the Baggies.



Albion's Paul Scharner (out of picture) reduces the arrears with a minute left courtesy of a powerful close-range header



Matt Richards drills his match-winning shot home from 18 yards at The Valley

SPORT

thechronicle

Martial artists give exams right belting

SIX martial artists are celebrating after passing their grades to earn black belts or improve their ranking.

The black belt examinations were held on December 5 at the Midland Shotokan Karate federation (MSKF) head dojo in Stafford.

The grading was conducted by Sensei Paul Smith, 5th Dan, who is the chief instructor of the MSKF. Richard Hill, aged 25, from Great Wyrley passed his grading and was awarded the rank of 3rd Dan.

The karate exponents from Elite Shotokan Karate Club, Essington who passed their grades were Sam Evans, aged 25, from Cheslyn Hay who was awarded a 2nd Dan black belt; David Sanders, 24, from Cannock who won his 1st Dan; Joshua Devey, 11, from Great Wyrley also earned his 1st Dan; Ryan Williams, 11, from Essington earned his 1st Dan black belt and Tom

Williamson, 10, from Great Wyrley was awarded his 1st Dan.

Chief instructor David Hill, said: "The grading was both physically and mentally demanding and lasted for three hours.

"All principles of karate were part of the exam including the 1st dans having to perform 14 katas, which are set routines, consecutively, 2nd Dans performing 16 katas and 3rd dans performing 22.

"The students also had to endure a tough sparring category to clinch their grades. This really is a fantastic achievement for all of them, it has taken many years of hard work and dedication to the sport of karate and they all fully deserve these new grades.

"Ryan, Josh and Tom will be among some of the youngest black belts in the MSKF and really did themselves proud on the day," he added.

Richard Hill finished top student on the day with an excellent pass mark of 90 per cent. Richard is now focusing on a training programme for the EKF England fighting team with selections in February next year.

Mr Hill, said: "This really is such an achievement for all of them and I think this is something that people across the region should know. I was extremely proud of them and they all performed brilliantly – they were a credit to the Elite Karate Club."

Sensei Paul Smith said on the day how impressed he was with the standard he had seen from the students and said they all have a bright future ahead of them in the sport.

Elite Shotokan Karate Club train at Essington Community Centre, Hobnock Road, every Wednesday and Friday and anyone interested in joining can contact 07890 646 921 or check out www.karateelite.co.uk



Back row from left, Sensei, Paul Smith 5th Dan – Head of MSKF, David Sanders, Sam Evans, Richard Hill, David Hill 3rd Dan – Chief Instructor Elite Karate Club. Front row from left Joshua Devey, Ryan Williams and Tom Williamson with their grades

Massive three points for Ladies thirds as captain makes return

HOCKEY LATEST

CANNOCK STAGS XI 3 LOUGHBOROUGH MIGHTY XI 6

The Stags resumed play after three weeks away with a morning push off at Chase Park. However, it was a case of wishing the snow had never melted as they crashed to a 6-3 defeat. A Nick Bandurak double and a Chris Beck strike proving only consolation on a poor day for the coach Jamie Fleet and his team.

LOUGHBOROUGH STUDENTS 2ND XI 1 CANNOCK 2ND XI 4

Cannock second string returned to action and it felt like they had never been away with a convincing win over the students. Goals from captain James Roberts, Paul Harris, Andy Humphrey and Tom Hyde made the trip back to Chase Park much more enjoyable.

CANNOCK 3RD XI 3 LOUGHBOROUGH STUDENTS 3RD XI 2

Cannock 3rds managed to take three points in a tight game. A double strike for Richard Parker and a single from James Foster won the points for the home side. However Parker let his team and himself down afterwards by getting needlessly sent off for dissent.

LOUGHBOROUGH TOWN 4TH XI 3 CANNOCK 4TH XI 0

Cannock 4ths travelled to Loughborough short of the majority of their side as they attempted to continue their good run of form.

Sadly, a mix of missing faces and not having played for three weeks accumulated in Cannock losing a lot of momentum and drive which had been created over the past few weeks. A tough defeat to take, however positives to be taken must be the performance of young keeper Ollie Balcombe who came to Cannock's rescue on numerous occasions.

CANNOCK 5TH XI 1 BOURNVILLE 4TH XI 3

Karl Owen and his Cannock 5th team played hosts to title contenders Bournville in a competitive and enjoyable game at Chase Park.

The game saw both teams play some good hockey and saw both keepers called into action, so much so that Cannock custodian Horn had to come off at half-time with torn ligament in his ankle. Responsibility fell on captain Owen to play the rest of the game in goal.

Despite playing good hockey and having kept the visitors deep in their own half for long periods Cannock only managed a single effort from Paul Joughlin. But at the same time Cannock let in three goals.

CANNOCK 5TH XI 7 WARWICK 4TH XI 2

Sunday saw Cannock 5th team appear on the hockey pitch again, and despite paying for it on Monday morning Cannock will have enjoyed a positive win over Warwick. In an entertaining and well spirited game Cannock showed some good quality and silly errors but managed to come away with a much needed three points. There were five goals for Josh Ward and single strikes for Mark Cotterill and Paul Martin.

CANNOCK 7TH XI 3 BRIDGNORTH FATHOM XI 1

Cannock's golden generation were back on the pitch at the first chance after three weeks of frost and snow and they enjoyed a positive afternoon against Bridgnorth. An Alan Craddock double and Bob Purshouse goal gave Cannock a 3-1 win. Special mention must also go to young keeper Brad Evans who performed admirably in the Cannock goal.

CANNOCK BADGERS 'B' XI 7 LICHFIELD 'A' BADGERS XI 1

Doubles for Jordan Joiner, Ollie Edwards and Lewis Michael as well as a single strike for Tom Bunn saw Cannock Badgers B enjoy a positive and comprehensive



Katie Moreton in action for Lichfield Ladies 5th XI against Wolverhampton and Tettenhall 4ths

win over Lichfield badgers. A huge thank you must also go young first team squad members Nick Bandurak and Ed Fleet who aided the youngsters in their victory.

CANNOCK 6TH XI 0 TELFORD & WREKIN 4TH XI 1

Cannock 6ths were the only team not to play on Saturday because of the weather. On Sunday they travelled to Telford as they attempted to win their third game on the spin. Sadly this did not materialise as they slipped to 1-0 defeat.

BLOXWICH 1ST XI 0 CANNOCK LADIES 3RD XI 2

With only one league victory all season Cannock Ladies 3rd team travelled to Bloxwich who had stuffed them 5-1 at the start of season.

A soft under belly and lack of concentration have proved costly for Cannock many times this season however, this day proved a turning point as the 3rds pulled out a great performance in captain Kate Richards's first game of the season after a knee injury. A Sophie Tibbetts double sent coach Alex Hill into euphoria along with Richards and the team as they picked up a massive three points.

CANNOCK LADIES 4TH XI 2 STAFFORD 2ND XI 4

Following two weeks off due to weather conditions Cannock got off to a good start but lost the ball on the break, which lead to the opposition scoring two goals.

In the second half Cannock managed to draw level after two goals from Millie Grimley, but once again they lost balls on the break and conceded another two goals.

CANNOCK LADIES 5TH XI 0 CANNOCK LADIES 2ND XI 6

Cannock Ladies 5ths faced a really tough week endur-

ing a disappointing result against Barton despite a huge team effort against a very strong and physical side.

Five players joined the team from the 6ths including Judy Ganecki who did a fantastic job in goal. All players gave 100 per cent playing in positions they weren't familiar with.

Anyone interested in joining Cannock Mens or Ladies Hockey Club should contact Alex Hill (mobile: 07775360412 email: alexhill28@hotmail.co.uk) and visit www.cannockhockey.org

Any organisation or individual that would be interested in sponsoring Cannock Hockey Club should contact Alex Hill and visit the website.

LICHFIELD LADIES 4TH XI 2 STRETTY 2NDS 0

Lichfield 4ths got straight back to winning ways despite having had two weeks without matches or training. They dominated this match from the first push back and the goals came from Joe Edgar and Di Millar. The score line would have been much higher had it not been for an excellent performance from Streety's goalkeeper, who was voted Girl of the Game.

LICHFIELD LADIES 5TH XI 4 WOLVES & TETTENHALL 4THS 0

Two goals from Claire Little were added to by Poppy Walford and Glenda Francis scoring one apiece. This means that the Lichfield side have beaten Wolverhampton and Tettenhall home and away already this season and it leaves the Lichfield Ladies 5th team in third position in the Staffs Womens' fourth division.

The Men's 7th team beat West Bromwich 2-1 in a friendly thanks to Daniel Wood and Stephen Little.

TABLE toppers White Hart crashed out of the Division Five League Cup quarter finals after leading 3-1 at half time.

Dynamo Bridge fought back with goals from John Mayor, Lee Houghy, Chris Geldard and a last minute winner from Dan Hillditch.

Cannock & Rugeley knocked out Turf FC 6-3.

Winding Wheel knocked out Nest 6-1 with a hat-trick from Nick Hodgkiss.

Leaders Lea Hall thrashed Lamb & Flag to reach the semi-finals of the Division Four Cup.

Broomhill Albion beat Chads-moor Utd 2-1 in the quarter cup final of the Division Three Cup.

Unbeaten leaders Yew Tree came from one down to knock out Crystal Fountain 5-2 in the Division Two Cup quarter finals. Colliers Arms knocked out Bloxwich Celtic 5-2, while Chase Spartans beat Royal Oak 5-1.

Belt Road sent Bignall End from Stoke packing 4-0 in the Staffs Premier Cup quarter final. They now play Blue Muggs from Stoke in the semis.

Fixtures for Sunday, December 19:

Cannock Chase Cup Round

Division	1:
M.Jones & C.Johnson	21 A&G
Storers	11; D&G
Edwards & D.Murray	14 S
D.Hayward & V.Gray	21 C.Marsh-
man & B.Preece	12;
M.Evans & L.Pritchett	19 K.Carter
& C.Barker	21
Division Two:	
PEvans & T.Allen	21
J.Hollis & S.Powis	8;
F.Statham	& Parsons
A.Preece	10
A.Tapper & J.Hendall	21;
K.Johnson	& D.Chester
18	
L.Cavill & M.Bards-	19
ley & G.Newey	21
J.Hollis & P.Cook	10;

Division Three:

L.Simonczyk & K.Platt

21; S&A; Baird

8; C.Pugh

K.Coulthard

B.Taylor & G.Garbutt

14; M.Hodgkinson & R.Edwards

21

A.Allcock & C.Baird

13; N.Egan & I.Roles

21; M&P Colbourne

21;

Simonczyk & Platt

Egan & Roles

Colbourne & Colbourne

Pugh & Coulthard

Taylor & Garbutt

Hodgkinson & Edwards

21

Baird & Baird

Allcock & Baird

21;

CANNOCK CHASE FOOTBALL LEAGUE BY TIM ELSMORE

Four: Lea Hall v Yates Sports.

Brereton Town Cup Round

Two: St Matthews v Newdealers;

Blowers v Brereton Social Lion.

Cannock Charity Cup Round

Two: Crystal Fountain v Legion;

Bridge v Bar Sport; Victoria Ath

v Louis Autos; Heath Hayes Con

v Harrisons; Rugeley Rangers v

AFC Winding Wheel; Royal Oak v

The Littleton; Hen House v

Turf; Noah's Ark v Wyrley

Juniors; Colliers Arms v Chase

Spartans.

Premier League Cup quarter

finals: Rugeley v Thatch;

Hawkins Sports v Alma 2010;

Pelsall Bush v Brereton Town;

Belt Road v The Winding Wheel.

Division One: Cannock Ascot v

Robin Hood; Kidware Oak v Victoria.

Division Three: Mary Rose v

Cheslyn Hay Ath; St Mary's v

Chadsmoor Utd; Brinsford v

AFC Littleton.

Division Four: Castle v

Midland Strollers; Bridgtown

Social v White Lion; T.N.T. v

Tackeroo.

Division Five: Cannock &

Rugeley v AFC Globe; White

Hart v Church Hill Vic.

BOWLS LATEST

LATEST results and tables from the Briggs Equipment Indoor Bowls League, December 12:

Division One	P	W	L	A	Pts
1	5	4	1	23	8
2	5	3	2	18	6
3	5	3	2	13	6
4	5	3	2	13	6
5	5	2	3	0	4
6	5	2	3	-18	4
7	5	2	3	-28	4
8	5	1	4	-21	2

Division Two	P	W	L	A	Pts
1	5	4	1	27	8
2	5	4	1	21	8
3	5	3	2	13	6
4	5	2	3	0	4
5	5	2	3	-1	4
6	5	1	4	-13	2
7	5	1	4	-14	2
8	5	1	4	-46	2

Division Three	P	W	L	A	Pts
1	5	4	1	41	8
2	5	4	1	28	8
3	5	4	1	13	8
4	5	3	2	13	6
5	5	2	3	-15	4
6	5	2	3	-15	4
7	5	1	4	-35	2
8	5	0	5	-30	0

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Albion and Blues
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HOCKEY:
Full round-up
of last
weekend's
action
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FOOTBALL:
Latest from
the Cannock
Chase Sunday
League
– see page 43

Grimsby Town up next as Chasetown reach second round of FA Trophy

SCHOLARS GO FISHING FOR A GIANTKILLING



Richard Davies celebrate his loan extension from Telford with a Man of the Match display for the Scholars against Kettering, above. Right: Gary Birch celebrates the goal that put Chasetown 3-2 up



KETTERING TOWN 1 CHASETOWN 2 (AFTER EXTRA TIME), FA CARLSBERG TROPHY 1ST ROUND REPLAY

A LAST-minute winner is always special in football. But when it comes in the last minute of extra time against opposition two leagues higher than your side, it really is something special –.

And that's what Grant Ryan achieved for Chasetown in Tuesday night's FA Carlsberg Trophy replay at Kettering Town.

Chance after chance went begging during the 90 minutes, but the action exploded in extra time with two early goals, a missed penalty for the Scholars, and a brilliant and sensational winner from young striker Ryan at the death.

Chasetown started strongly and took the game to the Blue Square Premier side, welcome returnee Dean Perrow producing a good turn and shot in the eighth minute but his shot was blocked.

Appeals for a Poppies penalty were turned down after Peel and Jean-Paul Marna went down in the area, while Perrow then outplayed the defence on the left and squared the ball to Gary Birch but his low shot was deflected out by Greg Taylor.

Ben Jevons forced Kelvin Jack into a fine save from 10 yards before the home side went close in the 41st minute but Price was on hand with a fine save, while heading into stoppage time Marna's effort bounced back off the bar and Patrick Noubissie sent the follow-up wide.

Perrow spurned a good chance on 53 minutes when he headed wide from close range. Price dived to push away Taylor's chance from the left before on the hour Ashley Westwood just failed to find the gap at the near post with a header.

Jevons had the ball in the net in the 71st minute but the offside flag was up and as the extra period began Price produced yet another good save to deny Serge Makoto. Two minutes later he was unable to stop Furlong's shot following a James Dance cross and the Poppies were ahead.

Makoto could have made it two four minutes later but his cross flew across the face of goal, and on 97 minutes the Scholars were level when Birch found a gap in the defence and stabbed his shot beyond Jack.

On 103 minutes the visitors were awarded a penalty when Danny Smith was felled by Westwood, but Davies was out of luck as Jack got behind the spot kick.

Ryan was introduced in the dying moments as a shoot-out looked likely, and with his first action in the very last minute he cut in from the left and fired across Jack to steal the victory right at the death to delirious scenes from those wearing blue.

The victory sets up a home tie with Grimsby Town on January 15. The Scholars visit Burscough this Saturday (December 18), kick off at 3pm.

Katie hits a debut winner

CHASETOWN LADIES

FC REEDSWOOD 2 CHASETOWN LADIES 3 – WEST MIDLANDS WOMEN'S REGIONAL LEAGUE (NORTH) LEAGUE CUP QUARTER FINAL

DEBUTANT Katie Thompson was the heroine as Chasetown won through to the cup semi-final.

After not having played for more than a month because of snow and cancelled fixtures this was going to be an extremely difficult game, made even worse by having only the bare 11 players.

However, Chasetown made a bright opening by scoring inside the first 10 minutes with a header from Stephanie Powell.

On the stroke of half-time Reedwood were given far too much space across the central midfield and Becky Troth was beaten by a 20-yard effort that levelled up the scores at half-time. A change in formation paid dividends as Chasetown took the lead again through Sinead Treanor, but again Reedwood drew level.

With extra time looming, Chasetown Thompson grabbed the winner deep into time added on.

Chasetown are really in need of additional players. Anyone interested, over the age of 16 should ring the manager Trevor Barter on 01543 306791.

Cannock & Lichfield Chronicle, a Midland News Association publication, printed by the company at Ketley, Telford, Thursday, December 16, 2010

Former Saddler earns Poppies a draw

CHASETOWN 3 KETTERING TOWN 3 – FA CARLSBERG TROPHY 1ST ROUND

A SENSATIONAL FA Carlsberg Trophy tie saw Chasetown take Blue Square Premier side Kettering Town to a replay with an action-packed 3-3 draw.

This was a true classic cup tie with non-stop entertainment and no real indication of which way the spoils would go at any point.

The Scholars showed no fear of their opponents from two steps higher in the non-League pyramid and put up a superb fight until former Walsall defender dented their hopes with an equaliser two minutes from time.

Roper headed out Chasetown's first real chance in the 15th minute, while a dangerous Kettering free kick on the edge of the area was hammered into the Scholars wall by former Birmingham City favourite Paul Furlong. Gary Hay found a breakthrough on 25

CHASETOWN FC

minutes but was denied by the offside flag before Poppies keeper Kelvin Jack tipped over a Jack Farmer free-kick.

The visitors broke the deadlock on 32 minutes when Ramone Stephens looked to have blocked an effort from Jean-Paul Marna, but Brett Solkhon stole in at the far post to poke the ball home.

Furlong headed over on 40 minutes before Gary Birch fired a free kick straight into Jack's arms to conclude the half.

The second half started in explosive and extraordinary fashion when Farmer's high free kick from the left was gathered by Jack, but the Trinidad and Tobago international inexplicably dropped the ball into the net and Chasetown were level, the furious keeper hoofing the ball into the crowd and receiving a yellow card. Kettering refused to let the setback

affect them as the atmosphere in the Scholars Ground heightened, Roper heading away a home attack on the hour before Chasetown took the lead against the odds.

Birch ran onto a Stephens cross and outpaced Roper to round Jack and coolly slot home the Scholars' second.

An instant fightback from the Poppies saw Chris Peel alert to clear Marna's chance off the line.

Ben Jevons tried to stab the ball past Jack on 70 minutes but was thwarted by the offside flag, and a minute later the Poppies were level when Furlong headed past Ryan Price.

Kettering could have taken the lead in the 80th minute but Richard Davies superbly blocked Marcus Kelly's shot, while Jack pushed away Dave Egan's effort following a Peel corner but a second corner from Farmer saw Birch turn, beat the defence and fire across Jack and into the net to restore the Scholars' lead once again. Still the tension remained, a goalmouth scramble seeing the Chasetown defence somehow prevent another equaliser

with three minutes left, but two minutes later Roper drew the Poppies level once more when ex-Saddlers player Roper volleyed a James Dance cross into the net.

The very last action of the match saw Furlong head inches over the bar, and a cracking cup tie ended in a draw.

Hayes outfought by no-nonsense Bloxwich

HEATH HAYES 1 BLOXWICH UNITED 3 – FA VASE ROUND 3

HEATH Hayes were outfought and out-thought by a Bloxwich side that took full advantage of the breaks that came their way.

Bloxwich opened the better side and with their robust no-nonsense style adapted to the tricky conditions better than the hosts.

After being under the cosh for the opening quarter Hayes finally put a decent move together but Chris Deakin's strike

HEATH HAYES FC

was way off target. Bloxwich took the lead in the 18th minute when the referee harshly penalised the home defence and Adam Simkiss fired home into the corner of the net. Hayes came back strongly and after a period of sustained pressure Deakin atoned for his earlier miss with a fine individual goal.

Hayes opened up the second half and Karl Wallis set up Ben Haseley but his

header was too close to the keeper. Andrew Davis and Alan Haycock both went close to putting the home side in front but in the 58th minute the game had a dramatic turnaround.

Tom Bagott attempted to clear a harmless looking attack but sliced his clearance and Karl Edwards headed home to put the visitors in front.

Bloxwich proceeded to dominate the rest of the game and John Freeman sealed the game with a third goal on 78 minutes.



Blue Army! Chasetown fans celebrate their team's last-gasp success

the chronicle

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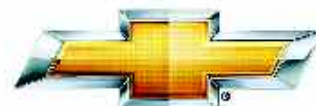


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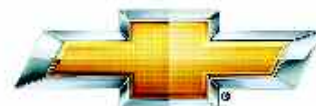
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